



INDEXA

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INDEXA

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The Solomon Islands (H44), including Temotu Province (H40) is a sovereign country consisting of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania lying to the east of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu and covering a land area of 28,400 square kilometers. This destination is very far from my home in Bulgaria, South East Europe—more than 14,500 kilometers.

The idea to activate these interesting countries for many radio amateurs came into my head after the completion of my T2GC

H44GC & H40GC Through the Eyes of its Organizer—2016

By Stanislav Vatev



Stan, LZ1GC, takes a few minutes from one of his 20+ hours/day of operating to display the INDEXA banner.

DXpedition in 2015. Upon arrival back home in Bulgaria in late October 2015, I was admitted to the hospital for ten days to treat an old disease and have diagnostic research associated with it. During my stay in the hospital, I did some research via the Internet for the Solomon Islands and Temotu Province.

Meanwhile I contacted Sigi, DL7DF and Frank, DL7UFR using email. I turned to them knowing about their successful and well implemented activations of these countries in 2013 (H44G and H40T), and I received from them a lot of important information and tips for preparing H44GC & H40GC DXpedition 2016. Here I should thank them for their help and support with information about choosing accommodations and propagation on radio amateur bands from these two entities. Planning a DXpedition to the Solomon Islands and Temotu Province, I knew in advance that the trip to this part of the world would be difficult, and it would take quite a time.

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H44GC & H40GC—2016 (Con'd)

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With my accumulated experience of organizing previous DXpeditions in the Pacific Ocean, in a very short time I developed a route of travel, identified accommodations, and drafted a budget for my DXpeditions as H44GC and H40GC. There were several options for travel to these islands in the Pacific, but I decided to use a route which had worked well for me for my previous DXpeditions. The chosen route was:

Leg 1 Sofia, Bulgaria, (LZ) to Frankfurt, Germany (DL)

Leg 2: Frankfurt, Germany (DL) to Seoul, South Korea H(L) to Nadi, Fiji Republic (3D2)

Leg 3: Nadi, Fiji Republic (3D2) to Honiara, Solomon Islands (H44)

Leg 4: Honiara, Solomon Islands (H44) to Lata (Santa Cruz Isl.), Temotu Province (H40)

In a very short time, the dates of activation of the Solomon Islands (H44) and Temotu Province (H40) were determined and confirmed with the various flights that had to be used to reach these two locales. I had the intention that both locales would be activated sequentially. For the first activation, of course, I chose the Solomon Islands (H44).

At the end of February 2016 in a conversation on the phone and an e-mail exchange, I invited Emil, DL8JJ, to participate in some stage of my planned DXpedition. He said that it would be his first DXpedition to the Pacific Ocean and we decided that he would participate in the first stage of this DXpedition—activation of Solomon Islands (H44), so we could travel together on the outbound legs!

This was the first stage of organizing the DXpedition. I moved to the next stage in organizing and conducting the DXpedition, namely getting H44GC and H40GC licenses and purchasing airline tickets. The application for licenses and receipt took me almost two months. I was helped again by Olga, LZ1QG, living with her family in Sydney, Australia since 1995. I turned to her for help because I was hampered by the large time difference between Bulgaria and the Solomon Islands and the difficulty of making a phone contact with Telecommunications Commission of Solomon Islands. The closeness between Australia and the Solomon Islands was not a problem for telephone contacts by Olga. After a phone conversation and the exchange of

several e-mails with Mr. Aaron Hopa—manager of telecom of Solomon Islands and responsible for the issuing amateur radio licenses—forms were sent to me to be filled out for licensing. After a few e-mails communicating with Mr. Hopa, on 25 June, I received licenses H40GC and H44GC. Simultaneously with the pursuit of the radio licenses, Emil and I purchased the plane tickets for our upcoming trip.

An important stage of the preparation of the DXpedition was the promotion and finding sponsors to fill holes in the initial budget. We were determined that this DXpedition would take place, but without the great support we received from amateur clubs, associations, foundations and individual sponsors, it would be a hardship for our financial situation.

July and August were spent preparing and testing our technical equipment. Emil (DL8JJ) and I agreed in advance how responsibility for equipment acquisition was to be split. He contacted Spiderbeam, Wimo Ltd, Difona Communications, Kush Ltd and ensured the DXpedition had coaxial cable (150 m), 2 pieces Fiberglass Poles (12 m & 18 m), a Flex 6300 transceiver and a Hexbeam antenna provided by G3TXQ. I was committed to provide two amplifiers (ACOM 1011 and ACOM 600 S), provided to us by the owner of ACOM Ltd - Vasko, LZ1JK. We were supported by workers from ACOM Ltd.—Val, LZ1VB and Stan, LZ1IU—with testing of the equipment and software setup which we used during H40GC and H44GC activities. Another task I had was to prepare a multiband GP antenna designed

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for 40m to 10m (including the WARC bands) and a GP antenna for 160 meter & 80 meter bands. This year in my hands passed more than 500 meters of wire building wire antennas, so this was not a problem for me. Day after day, step by step at the beginning of September we started to pack our luggage and we were well prepared for the journey to the Pacific Ocean.

On 19 September after a two-hour flight on a Bulgarian Air plane I was in Frankfurt, Germany. On 20 September, we made final corrections in our luggage with which we had to travel. We were ready and looked forward for our flight on the next day's evening to Seoul, South Korea. On the next day at 1800, we were in Terminal 1, Frankfurt International Airport. Our consignors were: Virjy (Emil's wife), their daughter, Laura, and our friend, Barbara. After a quick and easy check-in and check of our



Emil, DL9JJ, and Stan, LZ1GC, depart for the South Pacific with loads of luggage.

personal luggage, we are in the flying fortress—a Korean Airlines Boeing 747. We are excited and are anxious to be airborne on the first part of our journey to the Pacific Ocean. We face an eleven hour flight. At this time I anticipate a friendly welcome in Seoul from my good friend Aves Kang (DS2AGH). To tell you honestly, I have become accustomed to these long flights. During most of the flight, I find that I can sleep. When I'm awake, usually I eat and drink nice white wine. We were treated to good service and attention during the flight from the hostesses of Korean Airlines, even

though traveling in economy class.

On 22 September at 13:05 our plane landed at Incheon Airport, Seoul. After the usual passport control we are at the place arriving passengers exit. Here, awaiting us was the business partner of Aves Kang (DS2AGH). After about a 30 minute drive, we are at one of the companies of Aves Kang, where he was waiting for us. There was a warm welcome on his part, a delicious lunch and conversation about radio amateur things and other topics in his radio room. Amazing person and friend! Despite his commitments as a successful business-



Aves Kang, DS2AGH, provided a welcome overnight break in South Korea on the long journey.

man, Aves Kang found time and a way to meet us and to ensure that we received a hospitable welcome during our seven hour stay in Seoul before we had to get on the next plane to Nadi, Fiji Republic. We were honored with such attention. I must admit that I coincidentally travel every year via Seoul. I knew that Aves Kang would meet us. We regretted having to cut short our stay in Seoul, but we felt it necessary to keep to our original schedule for our long and arduous journey!

The next step to get to Solomon Islands was an eleven hour flight with Korean Airlines from Seoul to Nadi, Fiji Republic. On 23 September at 8:35 we were at the international airport in Nadi, Fiji Republic. Again we experienced passport control, baggage checking--familiar things for international trav-

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el. I already knew what I must explain to customs officials about the baggage with which we travelled. Therefore we did not have any problems with the local custom officers.

Fiji is a beautiful island country with friendly people. However, one must always be mindful of local customs when you are a guest in another's country. Coming out of the airport with almost 100 kg luggage, we hired a taxi and headed to Travelers Hotel, located near the airport where we had a reservation for the night. We checked into the hotel and got a short rest. After our rest, we had enough time for a walk to take a look at the center of Nadi, Fiji Republic. That evening we spent a few unforgettable hours in a local outdoor restaurant listening to a good rock music band to unwind after nearly three full days of travel. Emil and I were very tired from the long trip, but at the same time we were very excited and happy. We looked forward to the upcoming 24 September—the day of our flight from Nadi, Fiji Republic to Honiara, Solomon Islands.

The morning of the next day we met with much hope and optimism. After morning coffee at a nearby café we went by taxi to International Airport Nadi. We arrived at the airport three hours before our flight to Honiara. We were unpleasantly surprised that our flight was delayed by five hours. Bad news, of course. And yet, it is not the worst news, because this is Fiji. Here everything is possible! The delay was long, indeed, and confused our plans for the scheduled time we had announced that we were to be on the air from the Solomon Islands, but we were pleased that although late in the evening, we would at last be in Honiara. This unexpected downtime at the airport in Nadi was wasted time for us. Yet, we experienced it and finally after a four hour flight to Solomon Islands, at 21 hours local time we arrived at the Honiara International Airport. And here we met with a nasty surprise. Seeing our specific baggage—two heavy paper boxes with ACOM Amplifiers, three transceivers, and a long (two meters) case with Spiderbeam Fiberglass poles—the boss of the team of customs officers told us that we must give them a \$300 USD deposit guarantee. They told us that the money was to be returned to us when leaving the Solomon Island on our departure flight. It was clear to us that it was unlikely this would happen. We insisted they give us a paper receipt with an expla-

nation of the reason for this "deposit". After a heated argument, we were told that if someone local could guarantee for us, the money would be returned before our departure. And here the next absurdity—we asked one of the customs officers where we could catch a taxi to our accommodations. He took off his jacket and said, "I'm the taxi and will drive you." My God, this was "over the top"! It happened—the customs officer, transformed into taxi driver drove us by his private car on a double more expensive fare to Guesthouse Honiara, where we had a reservation for the period from 24 September to 3 October 2016.

Our accommodations and transmit location on Solomon Islands was Guesthouse Honiara, on the top of the hill—the highest point in Honiara. This place is about 15 minutes by car from the International Airport of Honiara, the capital of Solomon Islands. At 22 PM local time we were in front of Guesthouse Honiara. Unloading luggage from the "taxi" and not even looking at our rooms, we began assembling and lifting the HEXbeam antenna. Aided by Peter, one of the occupants of the Guesthouse Honiara, and later our active helper, we managed to quickly to put up the antenna. It was already dark outside.

As soon as we were done with the antenna raising, we undertook the quick installation of the first workstation consisting of Flex 6300 and ACOM 600S. At 14:33z, H44GC with Emil (DL8JJ) operating was on the air on RTTY in the CQWW RTTY Contest. The first contact was with JE1LFX on 14.088 MHz. Unfortunately, the propagation was very bad and bands from 20m to 10m were closed at this time of the night. For this reason until the morning local time H44GC made only 20 QSOs! Later, around 20:00z, the 20m band began to "awaken" and Emil started working on CW and developed a decent pileup.

Outside, we could observe the signs of an approaching sunrise. Although it was still dark, I left Emil working on 14 MHz, CW and started preparing for lifting the Multiband GP antenna designed for 40m to 10m bands. When the antenna was assembled and ready for lifting, I called for Emil and we both, together, quickly stood the mast in vertical position and we fixed wires and elements with ropes provided for this purpose. The antenna was ready! After this, Emil continued working on 20 meters CW.

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This Hexbeam was soon joined by our Multi-band GP antenna.

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At this time I quickly prepared the second workstation consisting of Kenwood TS-480 SAT and ACOM 1011. I checked the SWR of the multiband GP antenna. It was good with values from 1.0 to 1.4 for different bands. I began operating on 18.070 MHz CW and immediately drew a big pile up! This was great!

At 22:30z on 24 September, H44GC was on the air with two transmitters, working on 20 meters and 17 meters, CW.



The “shack” in Honiara.

The next morning, I worked the pileup, but during that time I kept thinking I should stop and lift the antenna for the 80 meter & 160 meter bands. So I did, leaving Emil to work 17 meters CW where there was a good pile up! Stepping out of our “shack” blew me away with a heat wave. It was midday, local time and very hot—over 45 degrees C. I had difficulties with raising the 18 m Spiderbeam fiberglass pole partly because of the deep black finish of the pole. The sun's rays made the wire elements and the mast so hot that it burned my hands. Although not as quickly as in the morning when lifting the Multi band GP antenna, I finally did finally get the Spiderbeam pole up with help from Peter—our local assistant. After getting it vertical, we guyed the mast, then mounted radials, tuning box, and the feedline. Following that I tuned and tested the antenna with excellent results—the SWR on 160 and 80 m was 1.0!!!

Immediately, I began to work on 80 meters, CW. The first contact on 80 meters was with ZL1TM at

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Pictured is our 160m/80m vertical with Honiara in the background. The high location gave good radio visibility to the world.

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08:38z on 25 September. Shortly thereafter the pileup appeared—mostly from JAs. The rate was good—2 QSOs per minute. At this time, Emil managed to work Europe on 17 meters CW with a rate of 3 QSOs per minute.

Between 24 September and 3 October, H44GC was constantly on the air, on all radio amateur bands with two operators working CW, RTTY and SSB modes. For this period of time, although propagation was extremely poor, we made 16,216 QSOs on all HF bands.

I emphasize again that H44GC activity actually took place under very poor propagation conditions on all HF bands.



Our “DX Warriors”, Emil and Stan, got little sleep trying to work down the pileups.

We had beat insomnia. We slept no more than 2-3 hours per day, but we were not able to overcome poor propagation. Because of the poor propagation we did not spend as much time using SSB. (We could not hear much SSB traffic.) However, I think we got good activity from Solomon Islands on CW and RTTY, especially 160 & 80 meters bands on CW.

My remembrances of the Solomon Islands will be

Prop Propagation Now

Solar-Terrestrial Data

29 Sep 2016 1905 GMT

SFI: 80 SN: 20

A-Index: 42

K-Index: 5

X-Ray: B2.0

304A: 114.8 @ SEM

Calculated Conditions

Band	Day	Night
80m-40m:	Poor	Poor
30m-20m:	Poor	Poor
17m-15m:	Poor	Poor
12m-10m:	Poor	Poor
Signal Noise: S4-S6		

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A Index=42, K Index=5 Enough said?

the friendly people, heavy traffic (congestion) on the road in the center of Honiara, and, of course, the big pileups on the air!

During our stay in Honiara we had a small problem with stray dogs. As on my C21GC DXpedition in 2014, dogs again showed they have an "appetite" for wire antennas. The coaxial cable and three wired active elements of the Multi band GP were gnawed by them. We had a small technical problem with the tuning device of 160 & 80 meter antenna, but these were correctable things. The dogs could not be as easily "corrected"!

The locals treated us very kindly, helping us any way they could. They watched with amazement and curiosity as we worked with our antennas. Many asked us what the purpose was for them and how we were using them. Throughout our stay in the Solomon Islands, we had the full support of Mrs. Sarah and Mr. Peter—responsible for the management of Guesthouse Honiara.

I will remember forever my meeting with Mr. Aaron Hopa, manager of Telecommunications Commis-

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sion of Solomon Islands. He is an extremely accurate and honest man and greatly facilitated us acquiring our radio licenses. I will remember the moment I obtained my paper H40GC & H44GC licenses! These have been memorable occasions on each of the DXpeditions I have performed.



The amateur radio licensing process is a highlight of each DXpedition that LZ1GC undertakes.

Despite our meager time for walking, we did some sightseeing of the government building, local telecom, shops, and open markets. I will remember all my conversations with locals—very talkative people—often wondering if I was married and how many children I have. In these conversations they frankly said that the meaning of their lives is strongly connected to their children, and their families. Despite poverty and difficult life, usually locals have families with 6 to 8 or more children.

On 3 October in the late afternoon Emil dismantled the Hexbeam antenna and later, around 23:00 local time, together we dismantled the Multi-band GP antenna that was used for the range of 40m to 10m. Almost all night we packed the luggage and equipment in preparation for our upcoming trip the next day—I to Lata, Nendo Island, Temotu Province (H40), Emil (DL8JJ) back to Frankfurt, Germany. Early on the morning of 4 October we quickly dismantled our 160m & 80m antenna.

Thus was ended the first stage of H44GC activity, realized by Stan, (LZ1GC) and Emil, (DL8JJ). A first stage only for me, because I had planned another one to activate H44GC for three days, after the end of the H40GC DXpedition, before my return flight back to Europe.

And the beat goes on . . . H40GC by Stan, LZ1GC Stage 2 of the DXpedition

The flight from Honiara, Solomon Islands (H44) to Lata, Nendo Island, Santa Cruz Islands Group, (Temotu Province) scheduled for departure at 11:20 local time on 4 October actually departed 13:30 local time, more than two hours late. This is sometimes the way it happens in the islands. Anyway, I experienced it!

At 15:30 local time, after a two-hour flight, the plane of Solomon Air lines landed successfully on a large meadow—the local Airport of Lata, Nendo Island, Temotu Province. Outside the heat was indescribable. I had arrived on Nendo Island in the hottest part of the day.



A typical "island hopper".

With my exit from the plane, the first thing that impressed me was the vision of the waiting room of the local airport. I was impressed by the fact that the greeters of our arriving flight were far more numerous than the arriving passengers! Because the

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flight was "domestic" there was no passport control and baggage checking. Deplaning, you take your luggage and off you go!



The "waiting room" at the airport had far more people to greet the arrivals than the number of passengers that could be seated on the plane shown on the previous page.

When you have a lot of luggage, the only transportation available to move your gear are private taxis (1 or 2 cars) that typically await incoming flights from Honiara. With only two arrivals per week by Solomon Airlines, the schedule for taxis is "somewhat irregular". Fortunately, I had an appointment with the owner of Lata Motel—Lionel—to await my arrival with a car. After retrieving my 70kgs of luggage, I found that nobody was waiting for me. I took the only taxi which currently was at the local "Airport" to drive me with the luggage to Lata Motel. It turned out that Lata Motel is very near the airport. After about a five minute drive by Taxi, I was greeted by Jenifer—wife of Lionel. When Jenifer saw my pile of luggage, she knew exactly who I was. Without ever having seen me before, she called me by name and greeted me with a welcome! The first thing that she said to me was that Lionel had been called away on a business trip to Honiara and would be home in a few days. She told me that she knew about my visit! Later she explained to me, that I was not the first radio amateur who stayed at Lata Motel and I realized, that in addition to Sigi (DK9FN)—using the callsign H40FN—there was also a group of radio amateurs from Australia.

It was already 16:00 local time. I had less than three hours before local sunset to erect my antennas and begin my operation on the air as H40GC. I decided to take a 10-15 minute break that I used to explain to Jenifer, that I would need the help of one or two locals to erect the antenna. Meanwhile, on arrival I had done a quick survey of just how I would place my antennas. Space was limited but still sufficient enough for both antennas—vertical on 160m & 80m and Multiband GP for 40-10 meters. With the limited time until darkness, I decided to erect the antenna for 160m & 80m. As I was unpacking my baggage, I saw three boys, almost of the same age, approaching me. Their eyes asked me, "What can we do to help you!" It turned out that these boys were the sons of Jenifer and Lionel. Their mother quickly explained to them that I needed help and they were already online! To tell you frankly, I was amazed because it turned out that the people of Temotu Province are not lazy like the people on some of the islands I have visited in previous years.

The young men helped me a lot! Definitely what we did in lifting the antenna was interesting to them. While preparing the mast, guys and radials, I explained to them what we were about to do and why. They listened with interest and helped me. They even called a friend with a boat so we were able to quickly locate two radials in the salt water of the ocean. They did not hesitate to dive into the not so calm waters of the ocean to affix the radials to rocks. During the tensioning of a guy, one of them climbed to the top of a 15 meter high palm tree. He did this with great ease, deftly using only hands and feet, without any reassurance and without any effort. I was truly amazed. Such support and assistance I've never met in my previous DXpeditions in the Pacific.

Although, it was already dark, the 160m & 80m antenna was lifted and ready to use. I immediately went about slowly and carefully installing all of the equipment, consisting of a Kenwood TS-480 SAT, an ACOM 1011 linear amplifier, a Lenovo laptop computer, and a MicroHam decoder for RTTY. Testing the antenna showed the desired result: SWR on 160m and 80m was 1.0—no measured reflected power!

I was pleased and very grateful to the young men

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and Jenifer for their help and support. Unfortunately, I was very, very tired. Sleepless days and nights during the H44GC activity, difficult and the lengthy flights by plane—all these loads exacted their heavy toll on my stamina. I needed a short rest! Despite the fatigue, I started to work on the air from Temotu Province, Nendo Island IOTA OC-100. After the first short CQ at 16:14z on 4 October on 3507 KHz called by JH0BBA followed a few fast QSOs with : WH7W, RK4FF, IZ8VYU and about 10 other QSOs for about 10 minutes. Unfortunately, though, the need for a sleep prevailed and I had to stop. So, at 16:30z, I passed in forced QRT for a few hours.

Only after 3 hours and 20 minutes sleep, at 19:50z, H44GC was again on air. Already on 18.070 MHz, CW even though using the antenna for 160/80m, I was working USA and other NA stations. It was a big pile-up. The rate was 3 to 4 QSOs per minute with some minutes providing 5 to 6 QSO's per minute for a period of hours. Thus it is, when there are people looking for a real DX station. Here is the place I recalled at that time Temotu Province (H40) was number 30 in the list of most wanted countries of CLUBLOG! So, I continued work on different bands—I could say in NONSTOP mode—into the next day. Pileups were everywhere so big that there was no time for me to stop work to lift the other antenna. On the third day from my arriving at Temotu Province, I decided to lift the other antenna. I completed that effort in a period between 12-1500 hours local time—a period when the propagation is worst on all bands. Even though in the hottest part of the day time when everybody seeks a shadow in which to sit, I managed to lift the other antenna, again with the help of the sons of Jenifer and Lionel. After that, I made some tests of the antenna with good results. The SWR was between 1.0 and 1.5 on the different 7 bands. I have used these same antennas for all of my DXpeditions in the Pacific since 2013. With them and with a power amplifier produced by ACOM Ltd., I am somewhat assured that I will not have any problems.

In the next 10 days I continued, almost without any interruption, working on all HF bands. The propagation was very bad—some might call it “poor”—on all bands, but I was still making about 1700 to



The “shack” at Temotu Province. Note that the bed still has not been used. That is one way to operate 20+ hours per day!

1800 QSO's each day. During all days of H40GC activity, I was diligent to work more and more time on 160m and 80m, but at the same time, I did not disregard working the other bands using the propagation “windows” for NA, SA and EU. So, the QSO's on CW and RTTY by day increased. Definitely I felt an obligation to the SSB operators, yet during this activity H40GC made only about 2000 QSO's on SSB. I must admit that SSB is not my favorite kind mode, but the propagation also was really bad. When propagation is poor, SSB signals become very weak, probably because of the required signal bandwidth. In such cases, I think, I correctly chose my strategy to be most active on CW and RTTY. Many DXpeditions do not like work on 160m, and some even on 80m. They do not want “lose” time on those bands and by that method, they make more QSO's. But, they do not understand, how much they lose the pleasure, which the operator feels, when working on those “MAGIC” bands!!! Except for the bad propagation and loss of electricity two days (8 to 10 hours per day), during the time of H40GC activity, I did not have any other problems which impeded my work on all HF bands—CW, RTTY, and SSB. During the two days of electricity outage, I used the time to walk around. In that time I met with teachers from the local high school, went to the local Telecom & Post office, visited the only Hos-

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pital on the Island (Lata Hospital), stopped in the house of the local Government & Police offices and enjoyed the open marketplace. I also visited the local office for Civil Protection against calamities and damages.

I would like say my thankfulness to George—the chief of the Civil Protection office for his support and help. He allowed to me the use of his official Internet, so I could upload my QSO's on CLUBLOG. Really, I had tried to use the services of the local Telecom, but because of bad quality of Internet my trials were unsuccessful. Sharing my problem with George, he immediately helped me with use of his office Internet, which was better. Thanks to his kindly assistance, I just managed once every two days to put the log of H40GC on CLUBLOG! George also provided me with a lot of information about the kind of help the people who live in Temotu Province need. A teacher named Gasper acquainted me and shared the most necessary things the local school needs.

From 4 October to 17 October with almost NONSTOP mode of work on the air in very bad propagation H40GC made 18448 QSO's on all ham bands (160m - 10 m) on CW/RTTY/SSB as a solo operator.

The pauses during which I took liberty from the activity of operating H40GC were no more than 3 to 4 hours

Continent By Band

Band	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	Total	Total %
AF	1	1	3	5	11	7	8	1	0	37	0.2%
AN	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.0%
AS	86	462	578	797	862	1859	1973	791	679	8087	43.8%
EU	40	169	312	322	1958	841	759	146	14	4561	24.7%
NA	216	574	569	399	222	1185	1040	486	200	4891	26.5%
OC	15	50	33	45	58	106	145	48	19	519	2.8%
SA	2	13	26	33	57	57	117	32	15	352	1.9%
Totals	360	1269	1521	1602	3168	4055	4042	1504	927	18448	

October 17th 2016, at 16:07z (local time 03:07, Oct 18th 2016), H40GC went QRT. The last QSO was with JA4ZA on 160m, CW.

per day. I used these pauses for sleeping (2-3 hours), also for uploading the QSO's on CLUBLOG. Oh, yes, I did eat, take a shower and have a coffee with a cigarette—to surmount the sleeplessness! Simply saying, it was a “Spartan” kind of living! During the short breaks I took some time to speak with the owners of the motel—Lionel and Jenifer. They are exceptionally polite and nice people.

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Owners of the Lata Motel—Lionel, Jenifer, and one of their children. Perfect hosts!

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At the time of my stay in Lata Motel, there were no other tourists staying there. Also living in the motel was the brother of Jenifer and his family. I was impressed with their smaller boys—twins. They were so playful and their mother was always running after them. I do not know whether you can understand why this was so, but the conversations with those friendly tempered people helped me remain cheerful and in a good mental state!

The flight back to Honiara was scheduled on the day of departure for 12:30 local time. I had about 6 hours to remove the two antennas and pack up the baggage. I used the time before sunrise to pack the luggage including the equipment. I called Lionel. We had talked about my last day earlier, and he helped me lower the two antennas which allowed me to complete my packing for my coming trip.

After that, with his help, we took some pictures with flags of some of our sponsors. At 10:30 local time I had a very kind farewell with Jenifer and others. Later, with both with Lionel and Jenifer accompanying me, we took the taxi to the local "Airport". Arriving to the airport was a surprise awaiting us. There was nobody at the airport! Lionel immediately said to me there was probably a cancellation of the flight, but he tried make me calm by telling me that in a day or two there would be a flight! Actually, I was not surprised. I did not worry, because I had already predicted that kind of thing from my earlier

island travels! The flight from Honiara to Europe via Fiji and South Korea was on 22 October—still 4 days away. Because of that, I was planning a second stage activity from Honiara. At that moment the only thing that made me angry was that I had already lowered and packaged the antennas. But I was ready to lift the antennas again, if the flight to Honiara was to be two days away.

With the taxi, we went to the office of Solomon Airlines in Lata. There we were welcomed by Mr. Gromyko, agent of Solomon Airlines, who felt compelled to tell us how proud he was because he had the same last name as the popular Russian statesman in the recent news. Once that was behind us, the man said there was no flight because of some technical reasons, but that by 16:00 local time he would be able to give us some information. He expected the flight would be in the next one to three days.

So, it was back to the motel. I preferred that the flight would be no earlier than the next day. It would be better, because there was possibility, that I could start working again from Temotu at least one more day. Unfortunately, at 16.30 local time Lionel got a phone call and the information was that the flight to Honiara was to be next day at 13:30 local time.

That same day in the motel the electricity stopped. So, my hope to have a chance working a day or two more from Temotu Province failed. But I said to myself, I must activate this place again in October 2017! During the night, I did not sleep well because my internal clock was getting accustomed to be working on the radio station at that time!

Next day, 19 October at 14:00 local time (with 30 minutes delay) on a small airplane of Solomon Airlines, I flew from Lata, Temotu Province to Honiara, Solomon islands.

Thus finished the H40GC DXpedition by Stan (LZ1GC) to Nendo Island, Santa Cruz Isl. Group, Temotu Province.

The second stage of the activation of Solomon Islands—H44GC was between 19 October and 21 October 2016 and it was completed only by myself—Stan, LZ1GC.

At the Airport of Honiara I was welcomed by Mathias and his fascinating wife Vivian—family friends of

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H44GC & H40GC—2016 (Con'd)

(Continued from page 11)

Lionel and Jenifer who I had just left in Temotu. Lionel phoned them, before my flight from Temotu and asked them, to wait for me at the airport and drive me to the Guesthouse Honiara. What a surprise! I was quickly transported by Mathias and Vivian to the Guesthouse. I was very thankful for them and was even more thankful when they told me they would also transport me to the International Airport Honiara on the day of my flight back to Europe on 22 October. At the parting with them, I immediately started preparing myself for lifting the antenna on 160m & 80m bands. It was passing 17:30 local time.

There was not much time to the local sunset. I had to lift the antenna before darkness. After that, I could quickly install the radio shack equipment and start working from Solomon Islands again as H44GC. I knew there was a small time to darkness, so I assembled a Spiderbeam Fiberglass mast, mounted the active element and capacity hat, and attached the radials and the guying cords to the mast. Once again I enlisted local help to raise the antenna with assistance from Mrs. Sara—the manager of Guesthouse Honiara—and her daughter. Although already dark, I managed to set the radials and coax cable. Later, I installed the equipment and started working on the 80m band CW. In that stage of H44GC activity, I worked more on SSB and RTTY on 17/15/12/10m by day and on 30/18/160m CW during the night. Fortunately, during the last three days of H44GC activity, the propagation on 160m was better and before the local sunrise I had a very good opening to work Europe for about 20 minutes. I used that time very well! On 22 October at 21:09z, H44GC went QRT with final result—18,306 QSOs on all HF bands, on CW, SSB, and RTTY modes. The last QSO of H44GC activity was with KB8VAO on 20m CW at 21:09z.

Continent By Band

Band	160	80	40	30	20	17	15	12	10	Total	Total %
AF	1	2	3	7	10	9	2	0	0	34	0.2%
AN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
AS	384	687	684	1005	1510	2465	1720	747	556	9758	53.3%
EU	65	354	528	611	912	1463	414	196	37	4580	25.0%
NA	146	265	186	434	305	781	904	188	39	3248	17.7%
OC	12	57	33	86	102	108	98	15	3	514	2.8%
SA	2	3	3	26	56	36	40	5	1	172	0.9%
Totals	610	1368	1437	2169	2895	4862	3178	1151	636	18306	

It is not my regular practice to evaluate the relative success of what Emil (DL8JJ) and I accomplished during our time activating H44GC. Yet, because of the reports and evaluations of many ham operators over the World who have spoken up, I do think our operation was deemed a successful DXpedition! Although, the propagation was extremely bad during the time of H44GC and H40GC activities we are very happy that we were able to give a "NEW ONE" to many radio amateurs!

At 14:30 local time on 22 October 2016 flight FJ 268 of Fiji Airlines initiated my trip back to Europe and Bulgaria. Again a very long and hard trip via Nadi (Fiji Republic), Seoul (South Korea), and Frankfurt (Germany) with two stops—in Nadi, Fiji Republic for 2 days and Seoul, South Korea (HL) for a night.

Finally, on 27 October 2016, I was home, after 38 days absence from Bulgaria. I was very, very tired but also happy because we coped with all of the provocations described in this article.

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H44GC & H40GC—2016 (Con'd)



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Thanks to all our individual sponsors!

Thanks a lot for the generous support of both **INDEXA** and NCDXF.

Thanks, too, for the support from WVDXA, DXers, THE CAROLINA DX ASSOCIATION, LSDXA, SWODXA, NATIONAL CAPITOL DX ASSOCIATION, GREAT SOUTHERN DX ASSOCIATION, SADXA, AGCW, WESTERN WASHINGTON DX CLUB, KC5WXA--JAKE Mc CLAIN DRIVER MEMORIAL A.R.C., MILE--HI DX ASSOCIATION, WILLAMETTE VALLEY DX CLUB, KOREAN DX CLUB!

I am impressed with the support that we received from many smaller clubs with smaller financial possibilities who nevertheless stepped forward in support of DXing!

Thanks to Jack (W3KX) from National Capitol DX Association, Jonathan (W6GX) from Mile-Hi DX Association and many other radio amateurs, who contributed support from the clubs and associations of which they are members!

Thanks for the support from European Foundations, Associations and Clubs: GDXF, SDXF, EUDXF, CDXC (The U.K. Foundation), GM DX GROUP, LADYG, CLIPPERTON DX CLUB. It is not the first time they have supported my DXpeditions!

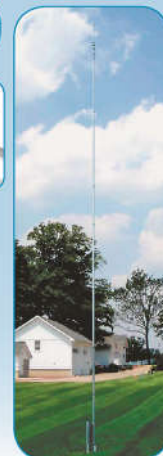
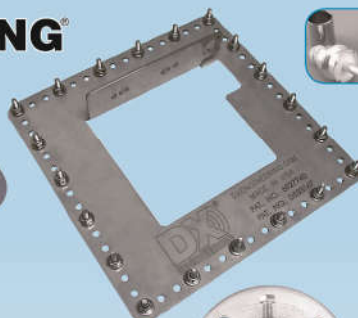
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To all, who supported us - THANK YOU!
Till we next meet via radio on the HF bands!

73! Stan, LZ1GC (H40GC & H44GC)

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